

Appendix 3

Declaration of Intent

The Geneva Mandate on Disaster Reduction

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction IDNDR International Programme Forum

5-9 July 1999

We, participants in the IDNDR International Programme Forum – Towards Partnerships for Disaster Reduction in the 21st Century, - recognise that the world is increasingly being threatened by large scale disasters triggered by hazards, which will have long term negative social, economic, and environmental consequences on our societies and hamper our capacity to ensure sustainable development and investment, particularly in developing countries.

We have to act decisively now, to guarantee a safer world for future generations. We must build on progress achieved during the IDNDR, so that risk management and disaster reduction become essential elements of government policies. The Yokohama Strategy (1994) and the strategy “A Safer World in the 21st Century: Risk and Disaster Reduction” (1999) chart the course. Political will is essential to ensure that appropriate policies and institutional arrangements foster a culture of prevention at all levels of our societies.

We shall adopt and implement policy measures at the international, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels aimed at reducing the vulnerability of our societies to both natural and technological hazards through proactive rather than reactive approaches. These measures shall have as main objectives the establishment of hazard-resilient communities and the protection of people from the threat of disasters. They shall also contribute to safeguarding our natural and economic resources, and our social wellbeing and livelihoods.

Furthermore, scientific, social and economic research, and technological and planning applications will be required at all levels and from a wide range of disciplines in order to support risk management and effective reduction of our vulnerabilities. In this connection, there is need for increased information exchange, improved early warning capacities, technology transfer and technical co-operation among all countries, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable and affected.

These last ten years have shown the multi sectoral, interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature of broad risk management and its contribution to disaster reduction. Continued interaction and co-operation on the above basis, among all disciplines and institutions concerned, are considered essential to accomplish commonly agreed objectives and priorities. This interaction shall be based on the strengthening of co-operation and partnerships engendered by the IDNDR Programme.

We stress the importance of developing and strengthening regional approaches dedicated to disaster reduction in order to take account of local specificity and needs. We emphasize in this respect, the need to support institutional initiatives and mechanisms for strengthening regional, sub-regional national and local capabilities, coordination, and applied research. We recognise the particular need for establishing an institutional arrangement to coordinate disaster reduction in Africa, and in this regard, invite existing and evolving mechanisms for inter-regional co-operation to accord priority to these concerns.

Appropriate financial resources will be needed to ensure the development and implementation of prevention and mitigation policies and programmes in all countries particularly developing countries. Innovative approaches should be explored including the funding of international initiatives. However, full use should be made of existing regional and national financial mechanisms involving those communities most directly exposed to risks. All bilateral and multilateral development assistance should include disaster reduction components.

We recommend to the international community and to the United Nations that, based on the proven success of the functional responsibilities and organizational arrangements during the IDNDR, the international cooperative framework for disaster reduction be maintained and strengthened. This framework should ensure partnership and synergy among all elements of risk management and disaster reduction, and promote a shift from a mentality of reaction to a culture of prevention. The growing threat of political, social and economic disruption caused by natural and technological disasters calls for bold action from member States of the United Nations in this regard.

Geneva, 9 July 1999